

Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans

754 was who used to do wonders. The bey thought it a good idea, and the man was fetched from his cell. He was very willing to perform, and asked only for a bowl of water. One was brought, and he made an incantation over it. He then said that if any guest would name a place he wished to see, it could be seen in the water. Someone asked for Malta, and Malta was duly reflected; the harbour, the quay, and a steamer just getting up steam. When it had been admired, the magician asked the bey: "Have I your permission, noble Bey, to go off in that steamer?"

"Certainly," said the bey.

The magician lifted his foot and put it on the steamer in the water-bowl, and immediately went off in that steamer and was never heard of again. No one but myself could see anything improbable in this amazing tale; with Beelzebub all things are possible.

2. THE EVIL EYE

754 The Evil Eye was rampant. At Vukli an unhappy woman told me
 761 it had killed all her eight children. A man there, to prove the power of his eye, had stared at a bunch of grapes, which had withered under his gaze and fallen to the ground before the awe-struck spectators. I did not meet this man.

754 Marko had a milch ewe he greatly valued. One day a mountain woman came to the door begging. He gave her bread, but she was not satisfied, and as she left she looked at the poor beast, which was perfectly well, and said: "What a fine ewe!" Soon afterwards it began to sicken. Marko sent for the vet., who said at once: "I can do nothing—someone has looked at this ewe. You must find her and make her remove the spell." She could not be found and the ewe died. Marko cut her up for mutton. I expressed horror. "The meat," said he, "is beautiful. There was nothing the matter with the ewe except a lot of yellow spots in its liver, made by that woman."

754 Protection against Evil Eye.—Many amulets are worn. Most horses
 777 and many cattle wear blue beads (sham turquoise), tufts of badger-hair, which is said to be very efficacious, or triangular leather cases containing inscriptions. A universal protection, as in many other parts of the world, is a horn or horns. Though the horse-skull is now popular to guard fields and houses, the original skull was probably a horned one, e.g. the familiar ox-skull carved on the frieze of many a classical and pseudo-classical building. A pair of boar's tusks, mounted as a crescent and hung round the neck, is a favourite amulet for a handsome
 [776] saddle-horse. It prevents evil spirits riding the horse at night and

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it was not." As "first aid" for a wound he prescribed the yolk of an egg and a lot of salt, well mixed and applied on a pad of wool; afterwards dress as above. It was very necessary, he said, to leave no splinters of bone in a wound. He described how he had spent two hours removing seventeen splinters from a fractured tibia with some little forceps he had made himself. You must work slowly and very carefully. You must watch your patient and compare his symptoms with those of others. So you learn. He had lately mended the leg of a horse by slinging it to the branch of a tree and putting the limb in a splint.

A shot through the knee, he declared, was usually fatal, and one through the ankle was difficult to make a good job of. But three fingers' breadth below the knee-cap and three above the ankle he could always be sure of curing. [761]

For inflammation he used leeches freely. Had just treated a woman successfully for apoplexy. She was "dead" on one side and speechless. He bled her from the temple on the "dead" side and seven times from the arm on the other side. She was better next day, and he bled her five times. She completely recovered. Marash expounded head-surgery. The head, he said, is like an egg. There is a shell, then a skin, and then the meat. If this skin is broken through you can do nothing; if it is not and the fractured skull is only pressing on the brain it is curable. He demonstrated how a flap should be cut and turned back. The broken pieces of bone must be carefully removed and replaced by a piece of hard-dried bottle-gourd chosen to fit the shape. The ointment must be added and the flap replaced and dressed. Some men were very clever at cutting away bone. He had never cut away skull-bone himself. A man in Mirdita had lately cut away a large piece of the skull of an injured man successfully. He indicated the upper part of the left parietal. The "kirjee" boy from whom I had hired horses then told us that he had a piece of bottle-gourd in his head. Had been knocked on the head, and stunned in a quarrel, and been unconscious till a "hekim" had taken out the broken bone. Now he said he never felt any trouble except that his head itched a good deal. I felt his head carefully, and there certainly was a hard edge to be found.

Marash Hutzi had a great reputation for curing wounds and certainly deserved it. It is of interest to find that a strictly antiseptic method was being used so long ago as his grandfather's time in the Albanian mountains when in England we still washed our wounds with any pump-water. Marash was over sixty. Trephining, I was told, was still practised to cure pains in the head, but I did not meet a case.

A dressing much used for slight wounds was olive oil in which a quantity of pounded leaves of the common St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) had been macerated in the sun. This seemed to have some

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salts" was the best remedy for all internal pains and begged for it. As he⁷⁵⁷ was refused, he induced his friends next visiting day to bring him some²⁷⁸ and took a huge dose. The results were disastrous: he collapsed. "This time I made sure he would die," said the doctor. But he did not, and three weeks afterwards he walked home, apparently none the worse.

The Worm of Life.—This singular belief I found common in the⁷⁶¹ Albanian mountains; I can find no parallel to it elsewhere. A worm is⁷⁵³ said to live in the ear and be the centre of the life of the individual. If the worm dies, the individual dies. I learnt this first in Shala. A very sickly child was brought to me for advice. He suffered from bad ear-ache and headache. I found his ears completely blocked with filth and wax, and one flyblown with maggots in it. I told the parents to take him to the Austrian hospital in Scutari and wrote a note for them to take to my friend, the doctor. As usual they wanted an "ilatch" (remedy) to work an immediate cure. I explained that no ilatch was of use. The ear must be washed out by the doctor. At once there was great excitement. Old Marko, much shocked, explained to me that washing would drown the worm and the child would drop down dead. All were amazed that I should suggest such a thing, saying reproachfully: "But, lady, you who have been to school must surely know the worm of life is in the ear." The wax in the ear, they said, was the worm's excrement. I objected to Marko: "But this is folly. You might as well say that the moisture from the nose proves that a worm lives there." He retorted contemptuously that everyone knew there was no worm in the nose.

The child was not taken to the hospital and no doubt died untended.

Further inquiry showed that this belief in the worm of life in the ear was very general. I have not found it recorded elsewhere; nor is it easy to explain.

An ancient and strange belief that certain animals and women could^[842] conceive through the ear existed up to the Middle Ages. Plutarch gives^[174] as a reason for cat-worship in Egypt the "fact" that the cat conceives through its ears. A Latin hymn to the Virgin, "Quæ per aures concepisti," offers this belief as explanation of the Immaculate Conception. The ear thus appears to have been regarded as the seat of life—or at least the gateway to it.

Is the Albanian worm of life a last echo of such a belief? It is easier to ask questions than to answer them.

In the section on "Taboo on Showing the Face" I suggest that the habit of covering the ears with a head-wrap may indicate that the ears were a vulnerable spot. It is, at least, an interesting coincidence that ear-protecting and a belief in the ear as a centre of life are found in the same district.

764 into it, and even the men are frequently heard to sob aloud. As soon as it is filled up, however, a sudden silence prevails, for now the *Kokiele*, the Greek [262] *Kólyva* (Κόλυθα)¹ is handed round, and it is accounted sinful to mourn whilst eating it. As each person takes a handful of this funeral dish, he says, "May he (or she) be forgiven."

765 On this and the two following days, the house of mourning is filled with a succession of condoling friends, who bring with them all the food necessary for the family, for no cooking is done in it during this period. Others send presents of wine or spirits, the bearer of which delivers them with the words: "May I have come for your good." On the third day, the wailing at the grave is repeated, and continued in the house of mourning for forty days, being performed either early on the morning of each day, or on Sundays and feast days only, by the women of the house and those who visit them for this purpose.

[184] With members of the Orthodox Church it is customary, as among the Greeks, to exhume the bones at the end of three years. Moslems, however, have a great dislike to disturbing a dead body in any way.

765 The grief of relatives is, as a rule, less demonstrative for the death of a woman; and for a man well stricken in years, no wailing takes place. In the latter case, the deceased has usually set aside one or more sheep to be sacrificed on his death as an atonement for his sins, the flesh of which serves for the funeral feast. At this feast, the guests drink "to

¹ See description of this funeral dish, vol. I. p. 99.

[Analyst's note: Kólyva is made of flour, boiled wheat, pomegranates, raisins, nuts, and spices.]

CHAP. IX.]

ALBANIAN WOMEN.

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the forgiveness" of the departed, and sing funeral songs in his honour. 765 761

When, as often happens, a man dies at a distance from his home, on the arrival of the tidings of his death, the funeral ceremonies are, with the exception of the actual interment, performed as above described. The women lament, friends hasten to comfort them, and the procession goes to church, the place of the bier being occupied by a youth, who carries the dish of *Kólyva*, on which is placed a cake for the priest.

Only slight changes are generally made in their dress by the Albanian women on the death of a relative. The chief mourners cut their hair short, turn their coats inside out, so that the fur lining alone is seen, and lay aside all ornaments. The nieces of the deceased allow their hair to hang loose for some months, or cut off a lock, and wear on their heads a black kerchief. A similar head-dress is assumed by the widow, who, if she has arrived at middle age, wears it for the rest of her life. If, however, she is still young, and intends to return to her father's house with the expectation of finding another husband, she wears at the same time her bridal apparel, and does not manifest such an exaggerated degree of grief. 765 [604] [292] [587]

Sometimes, as illustrated in the history of Shainitza¹ and in folk-tale,² the grief of the women finds expression in giving to their dwelling the most dismal and funereal appearance, by painting black either the whole of the outside of the house, or the shutters only, and covering up or removing from their usual places the mirrors and other ornaments.

¹ See p. 225.² P. 315.

776 personifications of the powers of Nature. Of these
 [171] imaginary beings, some belong exclusively to Albania,
 while others may also be found among the super-
 stitions of Slavs, Greeks, and Turks. The Vilas
 seem to approach most nearly to our own fairies;
 though, like the Nereids of the Greeks, they are of
 the full stature of mortals. Like our fairies, too,
 it is unlucky to mention them by name, and they
 are generally referred to as "Those outside," "The
 Happy Ones," the "Brides of May," or "The Brides
 of the Mountain." As a rule they are harmless, if
 not offended, and amuse themselves with elfish tricks,
 such as taking little children up to the roof of the
 house to play with and bringing them back safely.
 774 They, however, take it very ill when mortals disturb
 753 them in their haunts, and interrupt their banquets; and
 761 so capricious are they, that they will place themselves
 invisibly in spots where they are likely to be dis-
 turbed, in order to have a little vent for their pent-up
 malice. The unlucky wight who sets an irreverent
 foot within their elfin rings receives a stroke from an
 invisible hand, and ere long sickens and dies. In
 consequence of this belief, it is said of one for whose
 death no adequate cause can be assigned, "He has
 received a blow."

776 The favourite haunts of the Vilas are retired and
 shady spots, but they also have a partiality for the
 gutters on the eaves of houses, which it is a rather
 risky matter to clean out, especially at night. The
 Vilas are said, in North Albania, to be of two kinds—
 well-disposed and beautiful beings, who ride about on
 fleet horses; and ill-disposed and hideous creatures,

A horrible belief prevails among the Ghegs that when men or women live to be a hundred years old their breath becomes poisonous and kills healthy people. Von Hahn says that old people suspected of causing sickness in this way, especially when an epidemic is raging, have atoned for their longevity with a fiery death at the hands of their panic-stricken neighbours.

A curious notion is also shared by Greeks and Albanians that shadows are capable of assuming an independent existence, and, being malevolently disposed, are able to deal men blows which usually cause their death.

The Dif, or Dev ($\delta\iota\phi\iota$, $\delta\iota\beta\iota$, $\delta\epsilon\phi$, $\delta\epsilon\beta\iota$), is, like the Kûrdish supernal of the latter name,² a being possessed of extraordinary physical strength. "He is a regular Dif" is said of a remarkably strong man, as we say, "He is another Samson." According to the people of Elbassan, the Dif is an enormous giant who lives underground and never comes to the surface, and whose business it is to keep the cauldrons boiling which supply the hot and medicinal springs in the neighbourhood of that town. These springs, in common with those found in other parts of the country, are much resorted to for curative purposes. Their waters are, however, drunk indiscriminately for all kinds of ailments, without regard to their various medicinal properties. The cures effected not being attributed to the water itself so much as to the influence of the magical beings who have their abodes in the springs and wells, people consequently go

¹ *Albanische Studien*, p. 163.

² See p. 155. Von Hahn suggests an Indian origin for this word, which, he says, he had found in no other part of Turkey. *Op. cit.* p. 162.

charred corpses, howling like wolves, donkeys, 775
 pigs, black cats, crows, oil-jars, brooms, &c. The
 Karkantsoli is the reanimated corpse of a Gipsy, which
 is believed to wander about, more especially during [761]
 January nights, ridden by cats, and slaying men with
 its poisonous breath.

In Albania, as in all the remoter parts of Turkey, 172
 there is no Pelasgian ruin to which is not attached 776
 some legend of a treasure hidden, and either "guarded 789
 by word and by spell," or placed in the safe keeping
 of a gigantic Negro, Djin, or other Supernal. Those
 who have concealed treasure in such places have
 also, it is believed, fixed the time at which it may
 be brought to light, and have left to their heirs a
 document containing a description of the hiding-place,
 the formula of the magic spell pronounced over it
 at the moment of burial, with the year, day, and hour,
 on which alone it can be recovered.¹ At the appointed
 time the heir goes to the spot indicated, pronounces
 the mysterious words, and the treasure immediately
 rises to the surface. Sometimes, however, the treasure
 is buried in such a way that, at the appointed time, it
 rises spontaneously to the surface, and any one finding
 it may appropriate it. The lucky person must, how-
 ever, be careful to keep his own counsel in the matter,
 or he will be punished by finding the gold turned to
 charcoal, and will not long survive the incident.
 When the treasure is in the keeping of a Negro, he 776
 occasionally spreads it out in the sunshine in order
 that it may not be damaged by the damp, and, at the

¹ Compare the Kârdish story of "The Armenian and the Dervish,"
 p. 169.

842 remove the charm. If an Albanian, having lost his first wife, marries a second in what the relatives of the deceased may consider indecent haste, they revenge themselves upon him by pouring water upon the grave of his dead wife, in the belief that this will have the effect of causing his second spouse to be childless.

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751 Among the Christian Tosks, if two or more children of a family have died in infancy, the next born baby is passed three times through a kind of iron tripod. If yet another child dies, the next baby is placed where four roads meet, a silver cross, for which nine women who bear the name of Maro have given the metal, is laid on its body, and the first passer-by is asked to be godfather or godmother to it.

[608]
782 In some places, the neighbourhood of Dibra, for instance, black sheep are said to be sacrificed by witch-wives for the benefit of sick persons. Similar sacrifices appear to be now substituted for those of human beings, who, in the popular traditions of the Albanians, as in those of other nations, are said to have been formerly buried under the foundations of important buildings; for Von Hahn relates that, during the present century, when a new bridge was about to be built by the Governor-General's orders over the rapid river Arcen, twelve sheep were sacrificed, their heads being buried under the piers, in order that they might be able to withstand the force of the current.

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731 When swarms of locusts or cockchafers, as some-

¹ See, for instance, the Greek song of "The Bridge of Arta," *Greek Folk-songs*, p. 81; and "The Monastery of Argis" in Alexandri's *Ballades de la Roumanie*.

PEAKS OF SHALA

776 heard them singing, and once, in the Wood of
 the Ora, which we will pass to-morrow, I heard
 761 them[†] talking together in the twilight. I heard
 776 them say that my cousin would die," said
 Cheremi, seriously.

"And did he die?"

"Of course," said he, surprised by the question. "He was a strong man, but within six weeks, sitting beside the fire one night, he said that he felt a pain in his heart, and in an hour he was dead." Cheremi crossed himself.

361 "But about the city of Pog. Does anyone ever go there? Could we go there?"

People sometimes went, he said; the shepherds always went to cut the branches of the trees, which belonged to the tribe of Pultit. How far was it from where we stood? He thought for
 [804] a time, and said, "Four hours." Albanians have no measure for distance except the time it takes to walk it, and this time corresponds with no measurement of ours. He had said that our walk of that day would be an hour and a half; we had already been exhausting every ounce of energy and breath for four, and were scarcely a third of the way.

"What does one find when one gets there?"

"Very little. There is the old wall which you see, and on the rock one can follow the lines of the walls of houses, built square and with many rooms, and from the rocks which have fallen they must have been tall houses. That is all, except that on some of the large stones one can

[†][The ora or nature spirits-†46] Analyst]

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property, however, he continued to regard as fair game ; but, ⁵⁷⁹ though he sometimes boasted to me of his plundering expeditions, he was careful for my sake to honour the eleventh commandment.

Our guide seemed only casually acquainted with the ⁰⁰⁰ district, and was besides terrified by rumours that a German patrol had been seen by the river earlier that night. Kolaver, however, encouraged him to find the path by alternately promising glittering rewards and jabbing him in the ribs with my submachine-gun. At last, after wandering for nearly four hours through rolling woods and meadows, we reached the house of Ramadan Kalloshi, where Maclean and Riddle were asleep.

Murad, the head of the powerful Kalloshi clan, had followed ^{669*} Zog into exile and lay in Istanbul, stricken with epilepsy. In his absence the leadership of the family was divided between his son, Ramadan, and his half brother, Myftar. In accordance with Dibran practice these two had proceeded to a division of labour : Ramadan pursued a pro-Allied policy, keeping in touch with the British missions, the Zogists, and the L.N.C., while Myftar sided with the Axis and led the government forces against the Macedonian Partisans. Ramadan was a dark young man, with the smooth, round features, delicate eyebrows, and moustache of a Moghul miniature. His nature was sombre and brooding, but he spoke with breath-taking frankness. Next morning in the course of conversation Riddle enquired after the health of his relatives and asked :

"How is your cousin, Selim ?" ^{669*}

"The dead one ?" Ramadan queried. ⁷⁶¹

"Forgive me," Riddle said, "I didn't know that he had died."

"Well, he's not dead yet," came the reply, "but the doctors say that there is little hope, so we call him 'the Dead One' and are dividing up his property !"

His words sounded blatantly cynical, but they were not meant to shock, and it struck me at the time that they were symbolic of the attitude of the Albanians towards the problems of the war. In their eyes the Germans, like Selim, were "dead", because past hope of recovery ; and the approaching

*669
[761] annihilation of both left no more room for hatred of the one than for love of the other. Like Ramadan, they were now solely concerned with staking out their claims to the succession, and saw no object in seeking to hasten or retard by a few days a process which was already moving swiftly to its appointed end. In such a mental climate all appeals to sentiment must fall on deaf ears ; but Ramadan was quick to see the strength of our argument that the Gheg chiefs must attack the Germans if they wanted to receive Allied support. He pleaded indeed that his clan was too weak to begin such a struggle alone, but undertook to join in if Abas Kupi, or Muharrem Bairaktar, should give a lead. He also put forward the interesting suggestion that we should invite the Gheg leaders to a congress to discuss the terms on which they would agree to fight.

"They'll give each other courage," he said, "and with so many competing for Allied support you'll get them all cheaper!"

We marched northwards from our meeting with Ramadan Kalloshi, following the low range of hills above the Drin until we came to Sohodoll, the stronghold of the Elezis. Elezis and Kalloshis had long contended for supremacy in Dibra, and a blood feud had raged between them since the days of the Turkish occupation. The Kalloshis were supporters of King Zog ; the Elezis, Republicans ; but, for the time being, they observed a truce arranged by Fikri Dine. Tsen, the chief of the Elezis, had fought against the Italians in 1943, and had severely mauled a company of Germans who had sought to arrest Peter Kemp when a guest in his house. Fear of the Communists, however, had led him to make peace with Tirana ; and he had gone there now to receive the salaried title of a Colonel in the government forces and a grant, it was said, of four thousand napoleons. His eldest son, Jelal, was with him, living at government expense in the *Daiti*, Tirana's one luxury hotel. His brother, Ersat, defended the Partisan interest in north Dibra ; his nephew, Dali, commanded the first L.N.C. division ; and two sons, Islam and Gani, were in touch, on their father's behalf, with Abas Kupi,

782 other offerings. If they irritated them, as an oath-taker would do by perjuring himself, they could only expect punishment.

[778] A most interesting example of the working of physical contact which is certainly of pagan origin was found in the Moslem district of Sulovë, south-west of Elbasan. There the most hardened oath-taker dare not forswear himself in a serious case, for he must then take the oath with a coin in his mouth, and perjury would bring [649] him certain death. The coin was clearly Charon's obol, as was the coin slipped on to the chest of Albanian dead in many widely separated areas.

In the exclusively Catholic oath 'by the stone' the solemnity of the oath came from the contact with a holy thing, and punishment for perjury was inflicted in any form that the sacred object chose. When, however, elders swore their equally solemn oath with a stone, log of wood or other weight on their shoulder, or when a man, stone on shoulder, claimed repayment of a dead man's debt, no principle of contact was involved. There was rather a quite crude belief that a perjuring elder would be punished by having to carry the weight for ever and ever in the next world.

775 God punished the perjurer both in this world and in the next. When the man died, his soul was lost, for being 'heavy-laden before the Lord' it had nowhere to go. If he was an elder who had taken an oath with a stone on his shoulder, he was doomed to carry the stone through all eternity. The first of these terrors was evidently inspired by the Church. The second is an older fear. The elder, when taking the oath, often expressed his willingness to carry the stone in the next world if he perjured himself, but an accused man left his future condition to be inferred, except for the cryptic phrase 'If I did it, may He reward me', which he sometimes inserted in his oath. When he was thinking only of himself he meant, according to the Catholics of Kurbin, 'If I lie may God kill me. If I tell the truth, may He forgive me my sins.' When he contrasted himself with his accuser he meant, 'If I did it may I suffer for it. If I didn't, and you've made me run the risk of taking this oath without due cause, may *you* suffer for it.' This sentence seems to have died out among the Moslems.

[761] Death was the commonest, and most dreaded, form of punishment in this world. In the most solemn oaths it was specified—
783 a son's in the oath by the child's head, the oath-taker's own in the oaths by his own head, with Charon's coin in his mouth, and in

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754 of the blood on a silver coin, wrap it up, and wear it as an amulet. It will protect you from all blood-sucking shtrigas.

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[63] Shtrigas especially like the blood of children. Child mortality in all
761 Balkan lands is exceedingly high. It is not unusual to find women who have borne from eight to twelve children, of whom none, or but one or two, survive. Nor could I ever make them believe that it was the way in which the babes were kept that was the real cause. So

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[751] terrified are the mothers that the Evil Eye may fall on the child that they guard it by keeping its heavy wooden cradle wrapped in a thick woollen coverlet. No Evil Eye, and no ray of light or breath of fresh

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[853] air, can penetrate. When suckling, the mother takes the cradle on her knees or kneels over it, and raises just enough of the rug to enable her
777 to give the breast; both cradle and child are hung with amulets. The

M same method, too, is popular in Montenegro and Bosnia. I have seen
754 luckless infants as white as bleached celery, slowly pining away; but
853 the poor mother believed the pining due to a shtriga, who had put a curse on her breast and poisoned her milk, or had looked at the

A child with an Evil Eye. Only the very strong survive. Marko used to
755 prescribe washing the child with a decoction of walnut leaves. Neither he nor anyone else would believe me when I begged for fresh air and sunlight.

A Only she who has caused the evil can undo it. My old friend, Tony
754 Precha, who was a mine of old-world lore, told me how a shtriga was
755 forced to do this: "The child of our neighbour was slowly pining away. It was the work of a shtriga. One day it died. I saw it cold and dead.

A The father, in a fury, shouted that he knew who had killed it. He
[681] rushed out and caught a woman and dragged her in. She screamed and denied that she had done it. He dragged her to the dead child, crying, 'Spit in its mouth!' She refused, and struggled and screamed. If she did not spit before the sun went down it would be too late. She knew this, and that was why she would not spit, for it was already late. Then the father, in despair, put his pistol to her head and shouted, 'Spit or I fire!' She spat. The father threw her out of the door. Then we watched the child. Very slowly it began to revive, and in three hours it was quite well. The father had saved it by acting at once." And Tony saw this with his own eyes.

How apt are most of us to believe that *post hoc* is *propter hoc*.

A In Albania evil spirits are most active in the spring. Garlic is tied
754 round children's necks on or about Shrove Tuesday as a special pre-
776 caution. In Shala, and, I believe, other tribes, the women tie a black
777 cord with three knots in it to the doorposts along with a pair of scissors, the wool-carding comb, and some berries (species unknown). This is not merely to protect the house, but to prevent shtrigas and bad spirits

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Y. Several local Austrian governors told me that in the early years of
775 the Austrian occupation the burning of lampirs' bodies was frequent.
761 The Government forbade and suppressed the practice and caused
much discontent. A recent case (told me in 1906) was caused by an
outbreak of enteric at Vlasenitza. A young man died. His wife sickened
and vowed that her husband had returned at night and sucked her
blood. The terrified villagers wanted to dig up and burn his body.
The authorities forbade it. The lampir was then seen and heard by
many persons whose blood he sucked. Fifteen persons died. It would
be interesting to know how many died of enteric, and how many because
they believed they were doomed to die by the lampir.

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CM
761 The peasants all through Albania and Macedonia I found to be
extraordinarily affected mentally if convinced they must die. They
would then make no effort to live, but simply "lie down and die."

A
761 In Albania I heard of several cases in which a man's death being
787 foretold by "reading it in a bone," he proceeded forthwith to sicken
and die; and there seemed no reason to doubt the truth of this.

I have often seen a patient refuse all food under the belief that he
would die in a week, and have resuscitated many who were very far
gone by forcibly pouring egg and brandy into them. The result of
the pick-me-up was sometimes comically quick. After an hour the
patient would ask for another and decide to live. Without it he would
certainly have died, as all the family continually said: "You are dying,"
and did not try to make him eat.

A
761 Belief in the fatal visit of a lampir has, no doubt, caused death.
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Since the civilizing power of Austria has been removed a fresh
instance of corpse-burning has been reported from Bosnia.

M
776 *Vilas.*—Last but not least the "vila," a female spirit which haunts
[177] the mountains, is very capricious, and works much evil as well as
some good. In Montenegro I was told vilas used to be plentiful, but
had been driven away by the advent of artillery. Maybe some still
haunted the deep limestone caverns.

M
[761] Of old, vilas sometimes swore sisterhood with mortals, and even
married them. But they were excessively jealous, and when a handsome
youth wished to marry they were apt to kill the bride.

Krsto told me a tale "that happened a long time ago in Montenegro."
A vila disguised herself as a beautiful maiden and caused two brothers
to fall in love with her. She urged them to fight each other and promised
herself to the conqueror. They fought and one was killed. The vila
then laughed and flew away. The unhappy survivor killed himself.

M
Y
776 I asked how, as both were dead, it was known that the vila had
caused the trouble. Krsto merely replied it was a fact well known to all.

787 But the sympathies of the vilas were Slavonic, for till recent times

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755 Monastery, I saw three. They stood with their hands on their knees and their heads thrust under the desk from which the pope was to read the Lessons. The desk being draped, their heads were hidden and their hind-quarters protruded grotesquely. If they could refrain from crowing during the reading of the Lessons they would be cured. The cure failed. Hardly had the pope begun to read when a hideous and unearthly din arose beneath his desk. No one intervened; no one even smiled. The pope read steadily, though his voice was drowned by the noise. At the end the three were led away—uncured. But I was told that as a rule the cure is successful. It may well be, for the Balkan peasant is very much affected by suggestion. He pines if he believes he has been cursed; he dies if he believes his death is "egil" (written in the Book of Fate). I did not see or hear of a case of crowing hysteria in Albania.

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[761
754] M
753 In Montenegro I was told a remedy for fever. It was to make fire with
278 a fire-drill of wood. The patient helped to work the drill. The fire went out of him and into the wood and he was cured. Perhaps the exertion of drilling produced sweat and so relieved the patient. Krsto believed greatly in this cure.

6. SOOTHSAYING

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787 For some inscrutable reason man in many lands has thought his gods were likely to choose the insides of animals as a means for revealing the future.

"Plucking the entrails of an offering forth, they could not find a heart within the beast." So the augurs warned Caesar to beware the ides of March. Balkan folk still find their fate written in the bones of certain animals.

I first saw the bones read at Selchan, a village in the Spata mountains, near Elbasan. It was in those days a very remote spot, and a Russian Consul was the only foreigner who had visited it within memory. A
[636
702] Most of the male population were "wanted" by the Turkish Government. But for the purpose of my visit the friendly Albanian Mutasarif of Elbasan arranged a truce. We were halted outside the village for a parley, and also to give time to all the men of military age (whom the Government was trying to conscript for the Army) to hide in the bushes. I was then received with great joy, and even greater hospitality. The ancient headman, Constantine Suliman, a fine figure in a white fustanella, swore friendship, and hustled the women to spread a noble
A
346 banquet of roast lamb, stewed fowl, cheese, milk, and maize-bread.

000 The district had neither church nor mosque. Every inhabitant had

Magic, Medicine, Soothsaying

the younger from looking at the bones because we were all happy, so "why pry into unknown evils?" A 787

It is not easy to say how the bones are read. Bone-readers will not tell their lore. I have pieced together the facts I gathered. The bone must be the breast-bone of a fowl (Fig. 20), or the blade-bone of a sheep or goat —no others serve. In Albania I found the fowl's bone most generally used, and in Montenegro the sheep's blade-bone. In both lands the fowl or sheep must have been bred by the house of the reader; otherwise, though it can tell of foreign affairs, it knows nothing of the fate of the house. The best fowl is a cock which is black without a white feather. It must be decapitated. If the neck were wrung the blood would all go wrong and the marks be useless. M A 787

This is the Albanian reading of the breast-bone: A good seer can tell at once if the fowl has been-bought or bred. The keel is the part used. In the thickness of the neck-end (A) runs a line of marrow which tells the fortune of the house. A hole in it means the house-lord's death, and a break means an illness or accident. A 787

Breaks and branches from this main line show illness, accident, or death to members of the family. Red spots and patterns in the bone mean blood. Some holes mean graves, others cradles, according to where they are placed. I failed to learn where. The sides (B) of the bone tell public events.

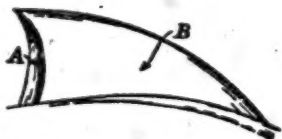


FIG. 20.—FOWL'S BREAST-BONE FOR SOOTHSAYING

When a line belonging to the family forks it means a quarrel in the family.

The late Mgr. Cozzy, Apostolic Delegate at Scutari, told me that he had tried hard to learn how to read the bones, and a man who refused to tell him said: "You make black marks on paper and know what they mean; but I do not. God makes marks on bones and you do not know what they mean; but I do."

Such is the belief in bones in Albania that I believe men have died from sheer terror when their death has been read. Thus, an only son—well known to a friend of mine from Djakova—was at a family feast. He picked up a fowl's bone, looked at it, and threw it down with a cry. His father asked what was the matter and the youth said: "In three days you will bury me." His horrified father picked up the bone and saw the reading was only too true. He cried out in grief: "In three days we shall bury thee." His kith and kin wailed on all sides: "In three days we shall bury thee." The poor lad blenched and sickened. He could not eat, gave up hope, and died. A 152 767

"When he saw in the bones he must die," said the Djakovan, "he died." And with more truth than he was aware of he added: "You

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754 and he thought: "Better that I lose my soul and then repent of my
538 sin than that I should ruin my mother's desire (for offspring), and
842 hearken not to my mother's curse." He then orders his young brother
593 Bogdan to do the deed and bring back a bloody knife as token. Bogdan
refuses, and Jovan wishes to kill him, too. Bogdan weeps and prays
his mother to remove the curse. But she will not, and Bogdan consents
and leads away his sister-in-law. She implores to be allowed to pass
three days in church, and he grants her prayer. There a miracle is
vouchsafed her and she bears a beautiful boy. Jovan and Bogdan rejoice.
But the mother, even then, will not pardon their disobedience. Filled
with wrath, she stabs herself, and, very properly, "the demons seized
her soul."

Here is a picture of the ancient power of life and death that parents
had over children as well as of the power and terror of a curse. We see,
too, the dawning influence of the Church upon the minds of a savage
people. The tale probably dates from the days when Christianity was
beginning to break down the pagan customs of the peasantry.

5
754 Strange is it to find the retrospective curse in the official report of
the trial at Salonika of the Serbian "Black Hand" officers in 1917.
Naum Dimitrijevitich, a journalist, giving evidence about the lawless
state of the Serbian Army on July 25, 1914, states: "Major Dobrosav
Gjorgevitich came up quickly, cursing as he came my *father and mother*.
He reached me and overwhelmed me with his horrible curses against
the *father and mother* of the Prime Minister, Nikola Pashitch, and
Stojan Protitch, Minister, and all the Radical members. . . . He
shouted: 'Now you shall meet your God. You shall never get away
from here.' Then he cursed the *father and mother* of Colonel Okano-
vitch, etc."

A
M
754 Thus even among the *intelligentsia* the use of the retrospective
761 curse persists. Pashitch's parents had long been dead. Small wonder
the peasant still believes in it.

Mothers in Albania and Montenegro will still tell you, when a child
has died, that a curse has been put on their breasts.

M
754 In Montenegro, in the days when the vladikas (bishops) were said
681 to be rulers, they had no temporal power in fact. They had no way
of enforcing orders save by terrifying recalcitrants with a threat of
excommunication or by putting curses on them. The vladika's curse
was greatly dreaded. When Danilo Petrovitch decided to rule as
temporal Prince and refused to be made bishop, I fancy he shore him-
self of much power. The curses of Vladika Petar I were very powerful.

He is said to have cried to an evil-doer: "May leprosy devour you!"
And a year afterwards the man died of it. To another he cried: "May
your stock die out!" And Medakovitch, writing of Montenegro in